On a table in front of her class, Ms. Ramirez has an electric skillet, a bottle of cooking oil, some plastic knives, and four ripe plantains, called "amarillos" in Puerto Rico. Today she is going to teach the children how to make "amarillo frito" (fried ripe plantain), or "maduros," as the Cubans call them.

Ms. Ramirez asks the students, "What do you think we are going to do today?" The students give various responses, including cooking. Then, Ms. Ramirez reiterates that they will be cooking, adding that they will be cooking "amarillos" and tasting them. She also explains that afterward they will be dictating a story to her about what they did and she will be writing it down.

The lesson continues as Ms. Ramirez pours some oil in the skillet as she describes what she is doing. While the oil gets hot, she demonstrates how to peel and cut the amarillos. Ms. Ramirez fries the amarillos and serves all the students a piece for them to taste. The students willingly participate in the lesson, taste the am amarillos/maduros, and share their impressions with each other.

After the students have finished tasting the amarillos, the paper plates and napkins are thrown away, the cooking utensils are put away, and the second part of the lesson begins.

Ms. Ramirez engages the students in dictating a story based on the common experience they just had. The students eagerly participate in dictating their sentences. The students dictated the following story.

*Making and Tasting "Amarillos"*

*Today, Ms. Ramirez teached us to make "amarillos." (Pedro) We peel the "amarillos" and we cut them in pieces. (Juana) Then, we fried the "amarinos." (Brian) The "amarillos" are soft after you fry them. (Steven) After we fried the "amarillos," we ate them. (Janet) I like the "amarillos." (Mary) They are sweet. (Ricardo) I no like dem, dey are mushy! But many like the "amarillos." We sink yummy. (Margarita) We cook more tomorrow! (Maria).*

Ms. Ramirez wrote down exactly what the students dictated. She also wrote the name of the student who dictated the particular sentence. This helps the students in developing positive self-concepts because they are proud to see their names on the chart paper, board, or overhead. In addition, when reading the story out loud, students have no difficulty reading the sentences because they remember what they dictated. This type of reading requires minimal decoding skills because they already know the content.

Ms. Ramirez continues by saying, "Now we are going to read our 'sloppy copy' and make any necessary revisions." As the students read their sentences, she encourages other students to help decide whether or not some minor changes need to be made. Thus corrections are made.

The edited story reads as follows:

*Today Ms. Ramirez taught us to make "amarillos." (Pedro) We peeled the "amarillos" and we cut them in pieces. (Juana) Then, we fried the "amarillos." (Brian) The "amarillos" are soft after you fry them. (Steven) After we fried the "amarillos," we ate them. (Janet) I like "amarillos." They are sweet. (Mary) I don't like them, they are mushy! (Ricardo) But many of us like the "amarillos." We think they are yummy. (Margarita) We will cook more tomorrow! (Maria)*

In the upcoming days, Ms. Ramirez will employ the story dictated by the students as the text for reading instruction. This dictated story provides the textual material that will serve as a basis for teaching such skills as capitalization; punctuation, including quotation marks and exclamation marks; relational words; vocabulary development; and even aspects of grammar (such as past tense of verbs). In addition, Ms. Ramirez will address some language interferences that her Hispanic children are having (such as the "th" sound, which they are substituting for "d" voiced and "s" voiceless and the use of “no” instead of "do not" or contraction "don't" to indicate negation).